THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI):

(a) Yes, Sir. The Drugs Controller General of India [DCG(I)] had issued directions under Section 33(P) of Drugs and Cosmetics Act in November, 2007 to the Drugs Controllers of all the States/UTs to suspend the manufacturing licenses granted by them for Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs under question.

(b) and (c) These drugs were being sold in the market with the licenses granted by State Licensing Authority without approval from the DCG(I). However, in January, 2008, the Drug Manufacturers and their Associations had filed Writ Petitions No.34777-34781/2007, 35354/07, 35844/07 and 36369/07 in the High Court of Madras at Chennai, and the matter is sub judice.

Eradication of bird-flu

865. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that bird-flu disaster has occurred in the country on an earlier occasion and went through after causing a major damage;

(b) if so, whether it is due to inadequate or ineffective preventive action taken or due to some other factors which are beyond the human control to recur again;

(c) the loss due to bird-flu occurred last time; and

(d) the extent of loss so far occurred and whether there can be an assurance that it can be eliminated once and for all within a time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The earlier occurrences of bird flu in the country have caused losses to the poultry industry in varying degree.

(b) The Government of India has, in conjunction with the States/Union Territories, taken necessary and effective steps to prevent the occurrence of bird flu in the country. Following could be one of the reasons, among others, for occurrence of bird flu:

(i) bird to bird contact in border areas;

(ii) smuggling of infected birds;

(iii) scavenger, wild and migratory birds;

(iv) Inadequate bio-security in poultry production system.

(c) and (d) As per industry information, the ex-farm egg prices suffered a decline ranging from 26% in Delhi to about 42.9% in Kolkata between 7th January and 5th February, 2008. During the same period, ex-farm live bird broiler prices declined from 10.3% in Delhi to 64% in Kolkata. The poultry industry has put the loss due to the current episode of bird flu in West Bengal at Rs.1500 crore over a period of two months.

The risk of the occurrence of bird flu continues to exist so long as the country remains vulnerable to the potential causes of the disease. The Government will, however, continue to take necessary preventive steps to minimize this risk.